



# The Eagle



The Monthly Newsletter of the Federal Community

The Federal Executive Board of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota

<http://www.doi.gov/febtc/>

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## The Federal Executive Board Is Changing

Exciting things are taking place at the Federal Executive Board. We are located at Room 510 of the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building in Fort Snelling, by the airport and 934th Air National Guard Base. Our offices are being remodeled for the first time in over 25 years. The policy board room will be a separate area that will double as a conference room and satellite downlink theater. The conference room will be available to Federal agencies for scheduling meetings and even weekend conferences. Both the executive director and the staff assistant will have separate and adjoining offices with a new entrance to the office suite. Please stop in and visit while you are in the area.

In other news, the FEB Policy Board recently held a two-day retreat to plan out this year's workplan as well as short and midterm objectives for the FEB. Ed Daum, the new FEB Chairman believes that "This year the Federal Executive Board will focus on several excellent outreach activities and networking opportunities within the Twin Cities." He continued "...as we all know Federal agencies and entities are not islands within communities but an active partner that is there to help serve the people of this great nation."

### What Is a Hammer Award?

The Hammer Award is presented to teams of federal employees who have made significant contributions in support of reinventing government principles.

The Award is the Vice President's answer to yesterday's government and its \$400 hammer. Fittingly, the award consists of a \$6.00 hammer, a ribbon, and a note from Vice President Gore, all in an aluminum frame. More than 900 Hammer Awards have been presented to teams comprised of federal employees, state and local employees, and citizens who are working to build a better government.

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**For General  
Distribution To All Federal  
Employees In Your Office**



<http://www.npr.gov/>

### Vice President Al Gore's Latest Book For Government Leaders *Businesslike Government: Lesson's Learned From America's Best Companies*

The story of reinventing government is first and foremost the story of 1,900,000 public servants striving, reaching, struggling to serve America. No large institution in America has a more dedicated or more competent workforce. *Businesslike Government* tells the story of how America's best companies have helped the federal government reinvent itself. Interspersed with wonderful Dilbert cartoons, *Businesslike Government* is full of short case stories about how the government has adopted private sector practices to make government work better and cost less.

Order your printed copies of **Businesslike Government: Lessons Learned From America's Best Companies** (GPO Stock Number 040-000-00695-8) at \$8 per copy:

- fax your credit card orders to (202) 512-2250
- phone your credit card orders to (202) 512-1800



## Bureau of the Public Debt



The Bureau of the Public Debt announced today the rate for Series EE savings bonds issued on or after May 1, 1997.

### SERIES EE SAVINGS BOND RATE 5.59%

The 5.59 percent Series EE savings bond rate is in effect for bonds issued on or after May 1, 1997, that are purchased or enter semiannual earnings periods from November 1997 through April 1998. The rate is 90 percent of the average 5-year Treasury securities yields for the preceding six months. A new interest rate is announced effective each May 1 and November 1. A 3-month interest penalty is applied to these bonds if redeemed before five years. New Series EE bonds increase in value monthly. The bond's interest rate is compounded semiannually.

### SERIES EE BONDS ISSUED BEFORE MAY 1997

The 4.53 percent Short-Term Series EE savings bond rate is in effect for bonds issued from May 1995 through April 1997 for bonds that enter semiannual earnings periods from November 1997 through April 1998. See the [Earnings Report](#) for earnings on Series EE bonds issued from January 1980.

### MATURED SERIES E SAVINGS BONDS AND SAVINGS NOTES

Series E savings bonds and Savings Notes continue to reach final maturity and stop earning interest. Bonds issued from May 1941 through October 1957, along with those issued from December 1965 through October 1967, have stopped earning interest. Savings Notes, issued from May 1967 through October 1967, have stopped earning interest.



## A Tribute to John N. Sturdivant, National President of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)

Hillary and I were deeply saddened today to learn of the death of American Federation of Government Employees National President John N. Sturdivant.

For more than 30 years, John played a vital role in the success of the American trade union movement. A born organizer, his determination, leadership and commitment were central ingredients to the growth of AFGE—the largest government employee union.

A champion of labor-management partnerships, he played an important and highly visible role in our initiative to reinvent government. He was a true hero of the reinvention process and his efforts contributed in a great measure to a government that really works for all citizens.

I saw his commitment to federal employees first-hand when we worked together during the Oklahoma City tragedy. He was a man who considered every government worker—AFGE member or not—his sister or brother. His vision and creative leadership in improving the safety and security for all federal employees at work will be just one of his legacies.

But another legacy will be his tenacity and strength—which he clearly demonstrated during the government shutdowns in 1995. These events were truly defining moments for John and his union. His leadership was an inspiration to all of us and I was very proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with him in this fight.

Today our thoughts will be with his daughter Michelle, his family and the men and women he served with such distinction.

William J. Clinton  
President of the United States

*"He was the model of intelligent and spirited activism, the quintessential public servant and one of the labor movement's brightest lights."*  
Alexis Herman, Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor



## The Electronic Eagle

Do you want to save fax paper? Do you have Email that can receive messages via the Internet? If so, then you could receive **The Electronic Eagle**. This Eagle has everything you get here and it is in *Full Color*. You can also forward it to your staff to keep them informed of the different activities within the Federal community. It could also be printed for distribution, in color if you have the right equipment.

Now for the technical stuff! You need to have Adobe Acrobat reader on each computer where you send it. The good news is that the Acrobat reader is absolutely free and can be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.adobe/acrobat>.

Need more information, call us at (612) 725-3687. The Electronic Eagle is also posted monthly on our FEB Internet Site, <http://www.doi.gov/febtc/>.





## News From The United States Office Of Government Ethics

### This Month's Feature: Gifts From Outside Sources

Executive branch employees are subject to restrictions on the gifts that they may accept from sources outside the Government. Generally they may not accept gifts that are given because of their official position or that come from certain interested sources ("prohibited sources"). Those sources include persons (or an organization made up of such persons) who —

- are seeking official action by the employee's agency
- are doing or seeking to do business with the employee's agency
- are regulated by the employee's agency, or
- have interests that may be substantially affected by performance or nonperformance of the employee's official duties.

*Continued on Page 6*



### Volunteers Needed For Upcoming Martin Luther King Holiday Celebration

The African American Affairs Council is soliciting volunteers from all Federal agencies in the Twin Cities to form an interagency committee to plan a celebration for the Martin Luther King holiday in January.

They are asking for one representative (a volunteer and an alternate) from each agency to participate in the committee. The Council is aware that agencies are short of staff and funds. By combining efforts this would be a great opportunity for all Federal agencies in the Twin Cities to get together for this celebration.

Please contact: Lovie Diaz 290-0304, extension 3040 and leave your name, phone number and agency if you are interested.



### Small Business Contractor of the Year and the Small Business Subcontractor of the Year

A Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year and a Small Business Subcontractor of the Year will be recognized in each of the U.S. Small Business Administration's 10 regions for their outstanding performance under federal contract. All nominations for Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin or Minnesota must be received the SBA Chicago Area Government Contracting Office, Suite 1240, 500 W. Madison St., Chicago, IL 60661 by December 5, 1997.

National winners in each category, selected from among the regional winners, will be honored during national Small Business Week activities in Washington, D.C. Nominations for Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year may be made by federal government agencies. Candidates for Small Business Subcontractor of the Year may be nominated by large federal government prime contractors. Nominators must use a special nomination form, available from any SBA regional office. Both the Small Business Prime Contractor of the Year and Small Business Subcontractor of the Year awards will be presented at the regional and national levels. At the regional level, nominations will be evaluated and winners selected by a panel of experts appointed by the SBA's regional office. Announcement of awards at the regional level will be coordinated by the SBA's regional offices. The national award winners will be announced by the SBA's headquarters office. Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria: Federal government prime contractors and subcontractors who fall within the SBA's size standards for small businesses in their industries and who have not won a Small Business Week procurement award during the past five years may be nominated. Nominations will be evaluated based on the following criteria: \* Management: ability to organize resources to ensure accomplishment of business objectives. \* Financial stamina and control: financial condition, ability to assume risk, and adequacy of accounting system. \* Labor relations: management-employee relations, including equal employment opportunity compliance. \* Customer relations: ability to understand contractual work tasks, make timely progress reports and function as a member of a team. \* Technical capability: ability to resolve complex problems. \* Resource utilization: use of capital assets and cash flow. \* Cost performance: competitive posture and ability to estimate and control costs to yield profitable results. \* Delivery performance: ability to meet time schedules. \* Quality performance: quality control mechanisms and ability to provide a reliable product or service.





## Focus On: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - St. Paul Regional Office and Insurance Center



### U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

March 15, 1989, marked a new era in benefits provided to America's veterans and dependents. It was on this date that the former Veterans Administration was elevated to the President's Cabinet and renamed U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Three entities comprise the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. They are the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the National Cemetery System (NCS).

The Veterans Benefits Administration is primarily responsible for administering the Department's non-medical benefit programs which provide financial assistance to veterans, their dependents, and their survivors. The major veterans benefit programs are compensation and pension, survivors' benefits, burial allowances and headstones, vocational rehabilitation, education benefits, home loan guarantees, and insurance coverage.



RONALD J. HENKE  
Director, VA Regional Office &  
Insurance Center  
St. Paul, Minnesota  
*He is responsible for administering federal benefits to over 473,000 veterans and their families living in Minnesota. These services total \$311 million in annual benefit payments.*

### St. Paul VARO&IC History

The St. Paul VARO&IC is one of 58 VA Regional Offices. Regional Offices are responsible for administering a series of benefits ranging from specialized vocational training to home loan guarantees.

In 1921, three federal agencies that provided services to veterans were combined under the Veterans Bureau, creating the 10th District Office in Minneapolis. After joining the U.S. Veterans Bureau Hospital at Fort Snelling in 1927, the District Office was renamed a Regional Office. In 1930, the Veterans Administration was officially established to consolidate all veterans' programs.

At the end of World War II, and because of the increased number of veterans, the Minneapolis Regional Office expanded with additional space into the St. Paul Commerce Building. In 1946, Regional Office operations were separated from the VA Hospital and additional office space was acquired in the Buzza Building on Lake Street in Minneapolis. On September 14, 1946, Fort Snelling property and buildings were transferred to VA, where VA Branch Office No. 8 was established. The VA Office in the Buzza Building closed in 1949 when all local VA activities were consolidated at the Fort Snelling site, then with a staff of over 1,700 employees.

The St. Paul VA Center was organized in 1957, when all VA benefit activities were consolidated. By 1962, all Loan Guaranty programs for Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota were under the jurisdiction of the VA Center. In 1964, all government life insurance policyholders west of the Mississippi River were also serviced by this office. The St. Paul VA Regional Office and Insurance Center (VARO&IC) relocated to its present site in the Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building at Fort Snelling on May 22, 1969. In January 1975, the Centralized Accounts Receivable Division, a nationwide debt collection operation for VA, was established at this station. This centralized debt collection operation was reorganized as the Debt Management Center in August 1991.

The St. Paul VA Regional Office and Insurance Center has evolved to meet the needs of veterans and dependents and to ensure that they receive the benefits to which they are entitled. Currently, this station provides service to the nearly one-half million veterans residing in Minnesota.



**Would you like to have your Agency profiled in the next Focus section? Our next deadline for the Eagle is December 3.**

*Please submit your materials including photographs and graphics to the FEB Office. Preferably on diskette in either WordPerfect or Microsoft Word format or Email articles to our [FEB\\_Twin\\_Cities@ios.doi.gov](mailto:FEB_Twin_Cities@ios.doi.gov)*

**Please Distribute To All Employees, for more copies call (612) 725-3687**



## OPM NEWS RELEASE

<http://www.opm.gov/>



## OPM 1997 FEHB Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

**Note:** Being that we are in the midst of the FEHB Open Season for 1998's health benefit plans, the Federal Executive Board of the Twin Cities is publishing this information excerpted from the OPM Internet site. The full graphical version of this and other FEHB news is located on the OPM World Wide Web Site at "<http://207.87.26.15/insure/98/html/index.htm>". You can also download most of the Plan Benefit Brochures from the OPM Internet site. Due to space limitations we are just printing the % Satisfied with the plan segment of the OPM 1997 FEHB Customer Satisfaction Survey Results, the actual OPM web site has detailed customer satisfaction reports for each main FEHB carrier in each of the survey categories listed below. **The FEHB Open Season is from November 10 through December 8, 1997.**

**The Ratings.** OPM surveyed enrollees and asked them to rate various aspects of their health plan on a five-point scale of poor, fair, good, very good, and excellent. Selected results are shown for the percentage of enrollees in each plan who rated their plan good, very good or excellent in the following categories (Some categories apply only to POS and HMO plans or only to FFS plans):

- Ability to see the same doctor on most visits,
- Access to medical care (arranging for and getting care),
- Access to medical care in an emergency (POS and HMO only),
- Choice of doctors available through the plan (being able to find doctors you are satisfied with),
- Costs you personally have to pay (FFS only),
- Coverage (range of services covered),
- Explanation of care (what is wrong, what is being done, and what to expect),
- Getting appointments when sick,
- How quickly claims are processed (FFS only),
- Quality of care (from doctors and other medical professionals), and
- Results of care.

**Overall Satisfaction.** This segment will show enrollees' overall satisfaction with their health plan by graphing responses to the following question: *All things considered, how satisfied are you with your current health plan?*

If your plan is not rated in this Guide, it is because the plan is new to the FEHB Program or the number of respondents was too small for OPM to reliably include their opinions. Plans open only to specific groups were omitted in this condensed listing by the FEB of the Twin Cities.

Plan Name	% Satisfied With Plan		
	Above Avg	Very	Somewhat
<b>National Plans</b>			
Alliance	15	39	23
APWU	30	35	21
Blue Cross/BS - High	41	39	10
Blue Cross/BS - Std	26	43	19
GEHA	29	40	21
Mail Handlers - High	20	41	26
Mail Handlers - Std	19	41	23
NALC	32	35	18
Postmasters - High	30	37	19
Postmasters - Std	29	37	19
<b>Minnesota Plans (Twin Cities area)</b>			
HealthPartners-Classic/High	19	46	23
Health Partners-Classic/Std	25	45	16
Health Partners	11	36	30
Medica Primary	11	40	28

The Eagle is published by the Federal Executive Board staff. We encourage any comments, suggestions or articles. Please submit information by FAX or Email: [FEB\\_Twin\\_Cities@ios.doi.gov](mailto:FEB_Twin_Cities@ios.doi.gov)  
**We prefer E-mailed material.**  
**The next deadline is December 3**  
Editor/designer: Ray Morris, Executive Dir.  
Co-Editor: Margaret Geisler, Admin. Ass't.



## The FEB Interagency Training Home Page

Please Forward This Segment To Your Local Agency  
Training Officer/Office and All Employees



### Upcoming Training Schedule Of The FEB Interagency Training Council

*December 16, 1997	*Pre-Retirement Seminar
January 13, 1998	Mid-Career Financial Planning Seminar
January 27-28, 1998	Basic Quality Tools & Application
February 10, 1998	Cultivating Your Benefits Seminar
February 12, 1998	Coaching and Facilitating
March 10, 1998	Business Planning for Mgrs/Supv/Units
March 10, 1998	Pre-Retirement Seminar
March 12, 1998	Measurement and Surveys
April 28, 1998	Time Management
April 28, 1998	Mid-Career Financial Planning Seminar
May 12, 1998	Cultivating Your Benefits Seminar
June 2, 1998	Benchmarking and Competitive Compar
June 16, 1998	Pre-Retirement Seminar
June 16-18, 1998	Basic Facilitation
July, 1998	no seminars scheduled
August 18-20, 1998	Advanced Facilitation
September 15, 1998	Pre-Retirement Seminar
September 22, 1998	Creative Problem-Solving
November 5, 1998	Finding the Value for Customers

All of the above seminars require preregistration. Registration materials are sent to each agency head 30-45 prior the seminar date. All of the above seminars will be held in Room 570, BHW Fort Snelling.

\*-Seminar will be held at the VA Medical Center Auditorium

### Gifts From Outside Sources

*Continued from page 3*

There are a number of exceptions to the ban on gifts from outside sources. These exceptions would allow the acceptance of gifts in the following circumstances —

- where the value of the gift is \$20 or less
- where the gift is based solely on a family relationship or personal friendship
- where the gift is based on an outside business or employment relationship
- where the gift is in connection with certain political activities.

Employees may accept gifts of free attendance at certain widely attended gatherings provided that there has been a determination that attendance is in the interest of the agency. Invitations from non-sponsors of the event may be accepted provided that certain additional conditions are met.

There are also exceptions for discounts, awards and honorary degrees, certain social events, and meals, refreshments and entertainment in foreign countries.

These exceptions are subject to some limitations on their use. For example, an employee can never solicit or coerce the offering of a gift. Nor can an employee use exceptions to accept gifts on such a frequent basis that a reasonable person would believe that the employee was using public office for private gain.

Some other things are not treated as gifts and may be accepted without any limitations. Modest refreshments (such as coffee and donuts), greeting cards, plaques and other items of little intrinsic value, rewards and prizes open to the general public, and pension benefits from a former employer are just a few examples.

If an employee has received a gift that cannot be accepted, the employee may return the gift or pay its market value. If the gift is perishable and it is not practical to return it, the gift may, with approval, be given to charity or shared in the office. Reference: 5 C.F.R. § 2635.201-205.



## Happy Thanksgiving!!!

From The  
Federal Executive Board  
*of the Twin Cities*



Recycle this issue by sharing it  
with all of your staff